## ABSTRACT

The present invention relates to a high-throughput diagnostic assay for the virus causing Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in humans ("hSARS virus"). In particular, the invention relates to a high-throughput reverse transcription-PCR diagnostic test for SARS associated coronavirus (SARS-CoV). The present assay is a rapid, reliable assay which can be used for diagnosis and monitoring the spread of SARS and is based on the nucleotide sequences of the N (nucleocapsid)-gene of the hSARS virus. The present method eliminates false negative results and provides increased sensitivity for the assay. The invention also discloses the S (spike)-gene of the hSARS virus. The invention further relates to the deduced amino acid sequences of the N-gene and S-gene products of the hSARS virus and to the use of the N-gene and S-gene products in diagnostic methods. The invention further encompasses diagnostic assays and kits comprising antibodies generated against the N-gene or S-gene product.